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CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE AND WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

(Items 4 and 5 (a) of the provisional agenda)

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN IN THE ESCAP REGION

Note by the secretariat

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I. FRAMEWORK OF REVIEW AND APPRAISAL

The World Plan of Action to Achieve the Objectives of the International Women's Year, adopted at Mexico in 1975, the Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women adopted at Copenhagen in 1980, and the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade adopted by the General Assembly in 1980 jointly provided the world community with a historic mandate for realizing its aspiration towards sexual equality. As embodied in its main theme Equality, Development and Peace and the subthemes Employment, Education and Health, the objectives and strategies of the Decade sought to address the following concerns and situations of women:

(a) Women have been systematically discriminated against and their basic human dignity and rights abused and violated down the past millenia in the context of two closely interrelated historical processes, one relating to gender based role differentiation and division of labour and the other to the emergence of power and domination as major factors governing human relationships. Gender-specific role and labour, justified by the childbearing function inherent in women, has restricted their lives in general and their responsibilities in particular to the domestic sphere. Thus isolated from the crucial resource bases for effective social participation - financial and material independence and political leverage - women have long been the "second sex", inferior and unequal to men and with little or no power to influence decisions affecting their lives, whether in the home, the community or the country as a whole. This process of highly institutionalized discrimination has reached the point where women are not only the oppressed but are their own oppressors.

(b) There is a close relationship between the unequal status of women and the issues of development and peace. Inequality as it pertains the majority of women is closely tied-in with the problem of underdevelopment which is largely attributable to unjust national and international economic and political structures and relations. The attainment of equality by women presupposes their equal participation in the creation of resources and their equal gains from them. The achievement of equality by women therefore necessitates compensatory measures to redress the accumulated injustices suffered by them and to introduce a better balance in all areas of life to ensure women equality.

/(c)

(c) Development is a total concept embracing the political, economic, soical, cultural and other dimensions of human endeavour. It entails specifically the development of economic and national resources and the creation of conditions appropriate for physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth for individuals and groups. The participation of women in development, thus defined, requires action at the national and local levels and within family, based on changes in attitudes and in the roles of men and women. Women's status is not a sectoral issue; rather, it should be an essential component of all development efforts. Further, the advancement of women's status is inalienably linked with the establishment of a New International Economic Order based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and co-operation among countries.

(d) Peace is a prerequisite to developemnt, and without development and the elimination of inequalities and discrimination of all forms, there cannot be lasting peace. Equality of participation in the development of friendly relations and co-operation among States will contribute to the cause of peace, to the development of women and to the promotion of equal rights in all spheres of life. Oppression and domination, based on power, gender, race, religion and culture have prejudice and unenlightened notions of self-interest as their common roots and they function to deny freedom to individuals or groups.

In promoting the attainment of the objectives of the Decade, the global frameworks of action focussed on strategies to remove obstacles and constraints to women's full and equal participation in development. These included actions to solve the problems of underdevelopment and of the socio-economic structure which places women in an inferior position, and to increase their contribution in strengthening world peace. In particular, emphasis was placed on the interrelated nature of actions that need to be taken simultaneously on several fronts: the world economy - (including the establishment of a New International Economic Order)., changing the conditions of the disadvantaged, especially the rural and urban poor, and those disadvantaged because of socio-economic and historical conditions.

These over-riding concerns and objectives of the Decade had been translated into recommendations for practical and specific measures and actions to be taken by governments, non-governmental organizations and

international agencies at the national, regional and global levels. These focussed on such intersectoral areas as national development plans and policies, national machineries and programmes, legislation, political participation, international co-operation and the strengthening of international peace. In the sectoral areas, employment, education, health, population, natural resources, science and technology, communications, human settlements, monetary factors, refugees and displaced women were seen as important.

But to what extent has the world community in general and the countries of the ESCAP region in particular been successful in achieving these objectives of the Decade and what has stood in the way of reaching such objectives? In attempting to answer these questions the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) and the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have embarked on country level appraisals, the former globally and the latter regionally, based on questionnaires developed in collaboration with other United Nations bodies and agencies.

It has been hoped that a substantial number of the questionnaires, distributed in June and August 1983 respectively, would be returned, completed, in time for use for the preparation of this Note. Unfortunately this has not been the case.* Thus the following review is, to a significant extent, based on materials drawn from existing non-official sources such as country studies, unofficial country reports, reports on sample surveys and statistical periodicals prepared or published by UN agencies and researchers in the non-governmental sector. The available materials cover less than 10 countries, although some sectoral data are available for as many as 22. The most serious information gap was in terms

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* 7 completed questionnaires received as of 18 November 1983. About 20 more are expectec by end of this year and early in 1984.

of geographical regions, the South Pacific and Indo-Chinese countries and those in the western-most area of the ESCAP region having been only minimally accounted for at this stage.

This review therefore is in the nature of eclectic impressions rather than observations of region-wide trends, which, nevertheless can provide a starting point in the discussion of the pertinent agenda items.

It should also be made clear at the outset that while the overall framework of review embraces the wide-ranging topics listed under agenda item 4 (a) and (b) of the Provisional Agenda, this Note confines its concerns to the topics of 4 (a) (General development: development plans and policies; national machineries; legal status; political participation, international co-operation and the strenghthening of international peace; and technical co-operation) and the first three topics of 4((b) (Sectoral development: employment; health and nutrition; and education) on the basis of highlights of information. The remaining topics have been covered in separate papers, or may be considered by the Expert Group only.

Further, it must be pointed out that, in the absence of quantitative data in many areas of concern, no attempt could be made to measure the changes that may or may not have occurred in those areas. Even where quantitative data existed and change could be discerned, only occasionally was it safe to attribute it to the mandate, recommendations, or stimulus of the Decade. Even in the employment, education and health areas where certain quantitative indicators point towards positive changes, for instance, it would be unsafe to credit such changes directly or exclusively to the efforts of the Decade. In the following, therefore, only those developments and awareness attributed to the Decade's activities or recommendations by governments themselves or other reliable sources have been cited as such.

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II. REVIEW AND APPRAISAL: TENTATIVE IMPRESSIONS

A. SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS AND TRENDS

NATIONAL MACHINERIES

One of the very few notable achievements in the ESCAP region consisted of the establishment of national machineries for women in many of its Member countries. Tentatively, such machineries were reported in 22 Asian and Pacific countries.

The question of whether or not to establish a national machinery for women and, if so, at what level and with what functions appeared to have been at the centre of policy and plan considerations of many countries. In fact national policies and plans for the advancement of women and for their integration in development evolved largely around or in close relation to this question.*

Within this general trend, there were two discernible streams in the national approaches to the development of policies, plans and machineries. One was of renovation and the other of innovation. Among the countries for which information was available, the latter predominated.

In the renovation stream, the bureau, section or unit already in existence in the government structure, such as those on women, children and/or family as part of the ministries, bureaux or offices concerned with social welfare, social development, community development or labour, were brought to the fore as focal points on women and given the task of proposing and carrying out activities related to women in general and to the mandate of the United Nations Decade for Women in particular. In the countries belonging to this stream, policies, plans and activities tended to be in terms of continuing what had been done in the past or implementing what had already been planned, adjusting these to varying extents to the Decade's objectives and targets.

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* This trend was to be expected since the establishment of any national machinery unavoidably carries with it budget and programme implications.

Arrangements for National Machineries for the Integration of Women in Development as of October 1983

Stream	Description	Country	Remarks
Innovation Type A.	Newly established national machinery for women at the ministerial level, with similar infrastructural arrangements at privincial/state level.	Bangladesh	Ministry of Women's Affairs (197_)
		Indonesia	Minister of State on the Role of Women (1983). First established in 1978 at Associated Minister level.
	Attached to or under the Office of the President, with sub-national committees in each of 201 constituet islands.	Maldives	National Women's Committee (1982). First established in 1979 as Women's Decade Committee outside the Office of the President.
	Attached to or under Prime Minister's Office, with varying scope of intersectoral coordination mechanism and subcommittees, and with or without focal point(s) within sectoral Ministry(ies)	India	National Committee on the Status of Women (1976). An ad hoc National Committee to investigate into the status and situation of women established in 1971, which submitted its report Towards Equality in 1975. Bureau of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, serves as administrative focal point.
		Japan	Office of Women's Affairs, Prime Minister's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office ( ).
		Malaysia	National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development (NACIWID) (1976).
		Viet Nam	Committee for the Protection of Women and Children, Office of the Prime Minister ( ).
		Western Samoa	Women's Advisory Committee (1979).

Stream	Description	Country	Remarks
	Attached to or under a sectoral ministry, with subnational infrastructure and a limited intersectoral coordination mechanism.	Philippines	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (1979). One of 28 agencies attached to the Ministry of Human Settlements, belonging to the Livelihood Development Programme Agencies Group. Until recently, the Commission was attached to the Office of the President.
		Sri Lanka	Women's Bureau of Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Plan Implementation (1978).
Innovation Type B.	Established national women's organs subsequent to major political changes, not necessarily in response to the Women's Decade. Charged with comprehensive policy-formulation programme planning, implementation and monitoring responsibilities in all matters relating to women and with representation at all levels of national decision-making machinery.	China	All-China Women's Federation (1949)
		Lao	Laotian Women's Union ( ).
		Mongolia	Committee of Mongolian Women ( )
		Iran	Women's Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran ( )
Renovation	Resorted to existing administrative machinery at subministerial level, with significant adjustments in response to the Decade's mandate.	Republic of Korea	Bureau of Family Welfare, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Until early 1982, it was Women's Bureau. Newly established in March 1983 a research and training arm (Korea Women's Development Institute) to strengthen its policy formulation, programme planning and Implementation capabilities.

Stream	Description	Country	Remarks
Ad hoc	Constituted national commission/committee to carry out specific national tasks related to the activities of the Decade.	Thailand	National Women's Development Committee ( ), inter-sectoral body composed or representatives of sectoral ministries and NGOs and under the chairmanship of the Minister of Interior.

Others, although they appear to fall under one of the above streams, have not been included in the list because detailed official information concerning them is not available at this stage.

List of National Focal Points on Women

AFGHANISTAN	Director Women's Department Rural Development Department First Block of Mickrorayan Kabul
AUSTRALIA	Director Office of Women's Affairs Department of Home Affairs and Environment P.O. Box 1252 Canberra City, ACT 2601
BANGLADESH	The Minister Ministry of Women's Affairs Dhaka
BHUTAN	Executive Secretary National Women's Association of Bhutan Thimphu
BRUNEI	Director Economic Planning Unit Bandar Seri Begawan
BURMA	
CHINA	President All China Women's Federation Beijing
COOK ISLANDS (South Pacific)	Women's Interest Officer Women's Interest Office Rarotonga
DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA	
FIJI	Chief National Council of Women Suva
HONG KONG	Chairman, Women's Programme Hong Kong Council of Social Service Duke of Windsor Social Service Building 15 Hennesey Road, 13/F Hong Kong
INDIA	Undersecretary, Bureau of Women's Affairs Ministry of Social Welfare New Delhi

INDONESIA	Minister for the Role of Women Jl. Merdeka Barat 3 Jakarta Pusat
IRAN	President Women's Organization of the Islamic Revolution of Iran Takht-e-Jumshid Avenue P.O. Box 3297 Tehran
JAPAN	Director Office of Women's Affairs Prime Minister's Secretariat Prime Minister's Office 6-1 Nagata-cho 1-chome Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 100
KIRIBATI REPUB. OF	President Kiribati's Women Federation Bairiki, Tarawa
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	Laotian Women's Union (Chairman) c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vientiane
MALAYSIA	Chairman National Advisory Council for the Integration of Women in Development Prime Minister's Office Kuala Lumpur
MALDIVES REPUB. OF	Chairman Women's Decade Committee Male
MONGOLIAN PEOPLE'S REPUB.	Chairman Committee of Mongolian Women Ulanbator
NEPAL	Chairperson Women Services Co-ordination Committee Social Services National Co-ordination Council Vrikutimandap P.O. Box 373 Kathmandu
PAKISTAN	Director-General Women's Division Cabinet Secretariat Islamabad

PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Chairperson Women's Development Committee National Council of Women Port Moresby
	National Planning Organization Port Moresby
PHILIPPINES	Executive Director National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women 1145 J.P. Laurel St. San Miguel Manila
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Director-General Bureau of Family Welfare Ministry of Health and Social Affairs Seoul
SAMOA	Secretary Women's Advisory Committee Prime Minister's Department Apia
SINGAPORE	President Singapore Council of Women
SOLOMON ISLANDS	Social Development Division Ministry of Youth and Cultural Affairs Box G.4 Honiara
SRI LANKA	Director Women's Bureau Ministry of Planning Implementation Colombo Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
TONGA	Women's Co-ordinator Central Planning Department P.O. Box 827 Nuku'alofa
TUVALU (Central Pacific)	Women's Interest Office Ministry of Social Services Funafuti
VANUATU (South Pacific)	Director Department of Social Welfare Ministry of Education and Culture Port Vila
	(Mrs. Grace Molisa) Second Secretary Prime Minister's Office Port Vila
VIET NAM, SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF	Chairperson Committee for the Protection of Women and Children Office of the Prime Minister Hanoi

In the innovation stream, there were two distinctive arrangements. In one, new national machineries on women were established for the first time in the countries' history during the Decade, some in its early phase (1975-1976) but mostly around and subsequent to the Decade's mid-point. The machineries varied from full-fledged ministries, intersectoral commissions or committees attached to or under the presidential or prime ministers' offices or sectoral ministries, to small units within such departments as on community development, home affairs, rural development or planning. Regardless of their levels, these new focal points served as the lead bodies in matters relating to women, although their functions and leverage vis-a-vis the national policies and plans varied greatly with their place in the overall government machinery. The emerging pattern in this regard appeared to be for the ministry level focal points to have the most comprehensive functions encompassing policy formulation, advisory, planning, plan implementation, the organization of women at both the national and grass-roots levels and monitoring and evaluation. The national commissions or committees attached to or under the presidential or prime ministers' offices or sectoral ministries tended to carry primarily an advisory function with some implementation role, usually in those areas which are closely related to or in support of the primary advisory role, such as formation and/or co-ordination of women's groups and organizations, research and information. The focal points established at lower levels had primarily an implementation role, with some co-ordination function added.

In the other kind of arrangement the entire or over-riding responsibility for women's affairs was placed with an official national women's organ that goes under such names as "women's federation", "women's organization", "women's union", or "committee of women". These women's organs could participate in all important national and sub-national decision-making bodies and/or processes, whether in relation to policies, legislation, planning and implementation or politics. They functioned in part and parcel with the overall national governing structure integrating women in its socio-economic, cultural and political pursuits. In most of the countries with such arrangements, the women's organs had come into being long before the onset of the Women's Decade. In one particular country only, it was formed during the Decade. In no case, however, could the Decade take credit for the formation of the women's organs in question since they were more

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directly an outcome of major political up-heavals and change and of national policies subsequently adopted. This contrasts with the first type of arrangements in the same innovation stream, which was directly in response to the mandate of the Decade.

Since none of the countries in the renovation stream had, before the Decade, or has now focal points on women above the bureau level, it can be inferred from the above that the innovation stream has a definite edge over the renovation stream. Exceptions to this may exist, however, where innovation is in terms of one or more low-level units in the government structure which had no focal points on women whatsoever before the launching of the Decade. These units enjoyed no greater role and influence in the national decision-making processes concerning women than the women's bureaux, divisions or sections that have existed since before the Decade.

There were countries belonging to neither of the above streams, having resorted to ad hoc arrangements involving one or more non-governmental umbrella organization(s) co-ordinated by a government unit, such as a national development planning board in one known instance. It is noteworthy, however, that recently the latter constituted a high-level commission, albeit still ad hoc, with senior level representatives of government ministries and non-governmental women's organizations, under the chairmanship of a cabinet minister. While, according to an informal source, this was in response to the immediate national appraisal task, the possibility of this commission becoming a permanent arrangement beyond the Decade casts.

As already evident in the foregoing discussion, some national machineries encompassed state/provincial and local level infrastructures, more often than not patterned on the national level or central structure. There were also intersectoral committees, subcommittees, task forces, working groups, etc. that bridged governmental departments and non-governmental organizations. Such comprehensive machinery which indicates an intersectoral and integrated approach to women's concerns, was found, only in a few of the innovation stream countries.

POLICIES AND PLANS

Beyond the decisions and plans connected with the establishment of national machineries and modality of their operation, national

policies and plans remained at a modest level or less throughout the Decade in most countries of the region. Within this context, two policy and planning approaches were discernible: the integrated and women-specific, although no clear line could be drawn between them. Typical of the first approach was the emphasis on the need for a "harmonious" development of women's role and status within the requirements of an overall national development, bearing in mind their vital roles as the nurturers of family welfare and the inculcator and upholder of social values and culture. While this will have to be tested against other country situations, the integrated approach may not be always what it appears, in that the possibility of it being used as a disguise for official non-commitment remains.

In one of the countries where the women-specific approach was taken, a comprehensive investigation into the status and situation of women was carried out by a specially appointed committee; legislative action was taken based on the proposals stemming from the investigation; and programmes and projects were incorporated into the development plans with a view to "removing, as far as possible, the economic and social injustices, disabilities and discriminations to which ... women continue to be subjected" and to "realizing the Constitutional commitment to equality of the sexes". National plans of action for women were formulated and adopted in the countries where the women-specific approach was taken.

In terms of targets and objectives, the policies and plans of both the integrated and women-specific approaches focused on mobilizing women for participation at the community or grass-roots level of development, fuller participation of women in economy, improving the conditions of female workers in agriculture and various sectors of industry, reduction of illiteracy, raising the levels of their education, skills and health conditions, and strengthening their capabilities as mothers and home-managers. One or two countries set targets or quotas for women in the legislative, the executive and/or the judicial branches of the government by policy or in practice, although no details are available as to the extent to which the targets/quotas have been actually met.

MOBILIZATION OF WOMEN

The establishment of national mechanisms aside, the area where perhaps the most significant beginnings have been made during the Decade

in the region was in the organizing of women for their mobilization. Such beginnings were reported in at least a dozen or so countries about which some information was available officially or informally. Apart from the socialist countries where organization is comprehensive with respect to all population sectors, millions of women have been brought together through officially sanctioned national movements or through a networking of non-governmental women's organizations. In one country-example of the former, a vast number of women organized themselves into several dozens of provincial and city councils and launched a major national women's movement in 1977. Designed to support and guide women's income-generating and other self-development project activities at the local community level, many millions in the country's currency were raised by the movement to support such activities and 7 million women were reported as their beneficiaries. An independent researcher reporting on this movement indicated that its impact on social attitudes of both women and men is immeasurable.*

In an example of the latter (non-governmental or voluntary mobilization), a mass movement among the lowest stratum of women, mostly landless agricultural workers and industrial workers was strengthened and new associations/groups involving a large number women in the urban slums were organized during the Decade. These movements, associations and groups have engaged primarily in co-operative economic activities accompanied by nonformal education on political systems, the position of women in different countries, etc. and skills training. Some associations/groups were of middle class, educated women acutely conscious and purposively active in raising the consciousness of other middle class women, as well as that of the working class women. They have successfully organized massive meetings and rallies drawing women from urban, rural and tribal working class sectors that had hitherto been left out of the women's movement.

The above examples indicate the resurgence and revitalization of women's movement in direct response to the Women's Decade in many

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*/ National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), Third National Women's Congress Proceedings, 4-5 May 1982, Manila;

Dolores H. Sison, Women and National Development of the Philippines, Proceedings of Asian Woman Parliamentarians' Seminar, 21-25 June 1982, Seoul. p.87.

countries where such movements have long existed but tended to settle into complacency following national liberation and independence. A national women's symposium held in 1982 for the first time in one country's history, involving 12,000 women, resulted in wide-ranging recommendations to address such issues as fuller employment, just and adequate working conditions, support services to enable women's entry and re-entry into employment, non-formal education and training, attitudinal change on the part of both women and society, more knowledge and information, the strengthening and/or creation of women-oriented infrastructure, greater participation of women in politics, governments, etc., and has led to a cabinet memorandum on their implementation.

The Decade had given rise to the formation of hundreds of women's organizations, agencies and research institutes which brought together women elites as well as the masses (in petty trades, home-based craft and industry, mid-wifery, domestic service and other types of daily labour) with common interest and in co-operative venture.

THE CREATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES BY WOMEN

As evident in the foregoing paragraph, going hand in hand with the organization of women, whether on a massive or small scale basis, was the creation of financial resources for their own use, particularly in connection with income generating projects, self-employment and other business ventures. In some of the countries about which information was available, such generation of resources has led to or been carried out with the formation of a financial infrastructure such as women's financial co-operatives, village savings and loan schemes, trust funds, revolving funds, and banks, either specifically created by women for women or in linkage with state owned or commercial financial institutions.* Although it is not possible to say how wide-spread this trend is in the region, examples of successful efforts in generating and/or securing independent financial resources by women, at both the elite and grass-roots levels, for their own activities and enterprises must be regarded significant not only in practical terms but as a gauge

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* Suma Chiteris, A. Review of the Progress Made in India Towards the Achievement of the Objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women, a research study supported and published by ESCAP (ST/ESCAP/145), p. 45.

National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), op. cit.

of women's awareness of the close linkage that exists between command over resources and status. That so many groups of women could translate such awareness into appropriate action seemed indicative of the level of maturity they have reached.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

The women's movement in general and the establishment of national machineries in particular were preceded by and resulted in considerable research activities and the production of data and information on women. This research and publication has begun to fill the vast information and knowledge gap that exists about women. Further, these often led directly to the formulation of recommendations to governments and to the latter's adoption of national policies on women, as well as providing women's organizations with bases of common action. Indeed, women's awakening consciousness and their self-mobilization owe much to the proliferation of research and information activities which were stimulated by the Decade.

B. DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND HEALTH

1. EMPLOYMENT

Female Labour Force Participation Rate

Despite a lack of comprehensive statistical data, some positive trends can be observed in the pattern of female labour force participation in the region. In most countries, overall economic activity has increased from 1975/76 to 1980/81 and, along with it, the rate of female economic activity as well. The latter, however, has been consistently much lower than the male economic activity rate. The female participation rate to total female economically active population has also been lower than that for males. The difference in the male and female rates was quite marked in Afghanistan with 4.9% and 54.1%, Bangladesh with 18.7% and 50.6%, India with 11.9% and 52.5%, Pakistan with 7.9% and 52.3%, Cook Islands with 17.4% and 41.5%, Niue with 13.6% and 37.2%, Fiji with 10.1% and 49.3%, Samoa with 8.7% and 40.5% and Tonga with 7.6% and 39.3% respectively as shown in Table 1. In these countries, the overall rates of economically active population were also relatively low ranging from 23.8% of Tonga in 1976 to 35.2% of Bangladesh in 1974. Socio-cultural factors discouraging gainful employment of women outside the home and

/generally

generally low levels of economic development are substantially responsible for the lower rates of female economic activity in the countries cited. Yet, the problem of female under-representation in statistical enumeration and analysis a serious underlying factor since women occupy a major place in both agriculture and the informal sector, not to mention unpaid domestic labour. Some countries simply do not count this contribution. In general the statistics have to be treated with caution since countries use differing bases for collection.

The improvement in the rate of female participation in economy during 1975/76 - 1980/81 has been gradual but firm in nine countries about which information is available so far. In seven of these countries the rates of female participation in the economy grew faster than those of males, the differences between the female and male rates having ranged from a minimum of 0.5% in Singapore to a maximum of 43.9% in New Zealand. Most noteworthy in this connection was the more than doubling of female representation in the economy in Thailand and New Zealand over four and five year spans respectively. In the Philippines, female participation increased by 10.4% over a three year period. It was only in Korea and Indonesia that there was a drop in female representation, over a three year period by 1.4% and 4.6% respectively. The reasons for these improvements and downturns of female representation trends need further discussion.

Labour Force Participation by Sectors

In most countries of the region, agriculture, manufacturing, trade and service constitute the dominant sectors for female labour. Although the informal sector is known to be expanding rapidly with dominantly female participation, no broad and reliable statistical data are available for inclusion in the present review.

AGRICULTURE

The share of economically active population is high in the agricultural sector despite the fact that it contriubtes less than other sectors to the gross national products (GNP) of most developing countries in the region. While agricultures contribution to GNP is around one-third in many countries the labour force in the agricultural sector comprises more than half of the total labour force, reaching as high as 89.9% in one South Asian country.

/As shown

As shown in Table 3 the rate of female participation in agriculture compared to the total economically active population varies greatly, however, depending on the overall female labour force participation rate and the degree of industrialization of a given country, among other factors. The lowest reported was 0.3% in Afghanistan where the total female participation rate across all economic sectors was also extremely low at 8.0% in 1979, and the highest 34.9% in Nepal where the rate of total female representation across all sectors was 37.7% in 1976. Other instances where female representation in agriculture was low included Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, while those where female representation rates in agriculture were high at 50% or more of the total female representation rate for all sectors included Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. In Indonesia and Korea, the rates fell from 25.5% and 21.9% in 1975 and 1976 respectively to 20.5% and 14.3% in 1978 and 1981 respectively. In the Philippines and Thailand the rates rose from 5.8% and 22.9% in 1975 and 1976 respectively to 13.3% and 34.7% in 1978 and 1980 respectively. In short, in one out of every three countries for which data was available, from about 50% to well over 90% of economically active women were in the agricultural sector and the countries in which this applied are concentrated in South Asia and South East Asia. Since the agricultural sector contributes only one-third of the GNPs in those countries, the high ratio of female representation in that sector would indicate the severity of their economic situation. What is particularly significant in this connection is that this pattern of female concentration in agriculture in most South Asia and South East Asian countries has remained relatively unchanged through the Decade despite accelerated industrialization processes in those countries.

MANUFACTURING

The most dynamic sector in the developing economies has been manufacturing. For example, the manufacturing sector of ASEAN countries grew at rates ranging from 6.4% in the Philippines to 9.0% in Singapore, 11.3% in Thailand, 12.9% in Malaysia and 13.2% in Indonesia for the period 1970-78, which exceeded the GNP growth rate in each country.

37. Female employment in manufacturing increased in almost all the countries for which data was available and in some, by nearly or over 1 million in absolute during 1975-81/82. Their representation rates

/in

in manufacturing grew substantially (13.2% to 7.7%) in the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Singapore and marginally (0.8% to 2.0%) in Hong Kong, Korea and New Zealand, while it decreased in Indonesia, Thailand and Australia by percentage points ranging from 0.2 to 8.1 as can be seen in Table 4.

In Indonesia, the overall situation of female labour participation appeared problematic. As previously shown in Table 3, the size of female employment in agriculture has decreased by 3 million for 1976-78 but only 1 million of which had been absorbed by the increase in manufacturing, mining and trade sectors. As a result, the size of female labour face in economy has dropped from 21 million to 19 million in total for 1976-78. In other words, 2 million of female had lost their jobs in the two year period.

Occupational structure

Representation of women was found to be high in service, sales and professional/technical occupations as shown in Table 5. In such industrialized countries as Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong, women occupied more than half of clerical and related positions and their ratio in those positions increased by several percentage points on the average during 1976-1981/82, whereas the administrative and managerial occupations were still dominated by men. There was no indication that the female ratio in the managerial and technical occupations is growing just because a country happens to be "developed". In Japan and Australia the female ratios for the category remained unchanged during 1975-1981 and 1976-1982 respectively. On the other hand, in several countries at the least developed and the developing levels, women appeared to have increased their representation ratio in the category by 5.4% to 18.6%. In three of the rapidly industrializing countries, the representation in the same category declined by few to several percentage points giving support to the often heard argument that economy although the participation of women has increased in general, the more important job opportunities available to them have remained at low levels where the functions are often extensions of women's traditional domestic roles. Women's entry into occupations so far may tend therefore to reinforce the low status of women in society rather than significantly advance it.

/Employment Status

Employment Status

The fact that women are still trapped in low status roles in society regardless of their expanding role in economy is evident in their employment status as well. The majority are either unpaid family workers or employees and very few are independent own account workers or employers. Table 7 shows some increase in women's share of the own account worker employer status during 1975/76-1980/81 in 8 countries. Also, the women's ratio in the unpaid family worker status to total employment status decreased in some countries. In Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and New Zealand, it increased during the same period.

Labour Force Participation by Age

The majority of the women in labour force are between 25-44 years in age in most countries. The proportion of young female workers aged 15-24 is also very high and it is even higher than those between ages 25-44 in Afghanistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Niue and in the manufacturing and service sectors. Female child labour between ages 0-14 is also found in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Maldives, Pakistan and Thailand. As Table 9 indicates, both male and female youth are highly integrated in economic activities in the region.

/Table 1

Table 1: Economic Activity Rate

Country/Member	Year	Female Activity Rate to Total Female Active Population	% Change	Male Activity Rate to Total Male Active Population	% Change	Economically Active Population
Afghanistan	1979	4.9		54.1		30.2
Bangladesh	1974	18.7		50.6		35.2
Hong Kong	1976	32.4		57.6		45.3
	1981	36.8		61.9		49.7
India	1971	11.9		52.5		32.9
Indonesia	1976	33.0	-4.6	53.6	-2.6	43.2
	1978	28.4		51.0		39.6
Japan	1975	35.1	1.9	60.6	-0.2	47.7
	1981	37.0		60.4		48.5
Korea	1975	30.0	-1.4	46.9	0.3	38.5
	1981	28.6		47.2		38.0
Malaysia (Peninsula)	1976	26.0	1.9	47.4	1.3	36.8
	1979	27.9		48.7		38.4
Maldives	1977	37.1		56.5		47.3
Pakistan	1975	5.7	2.2	48.6	3.7	27.6
	1982	7.9		52.3		31.0
Philippines	1975	17.1	10.4	46.4	-0.1	31.9
	1978	27.5		46.3		36.9
Sri Lanka	1971	19.1	1.9	50.7	2.4	35.4
	1980/81	21.2		53.1		37.3
Singapore	1976	25.5	4.5	54.2	5.0	40.0
	1980	33.0		59.2		46.3
Thailand	1976	25.6	20.1	41.6	8.8	33.6
	1980	45.7		50.4		48.1
Australia	1976	32.2	1.6	57.2	0.8	44.7
	1980	33.8		58.0		45.9
New Zealand	1976	26.0	29.4	55.4	-14.5	40.7
	1981	55.4		41.9		28.5
Cook Islands	1976	17.4		41.4		29.7
Polinesie Francaise	1977	18.9		42.6		31.3
Niue	1976	13.6		37.2		25.4
Fiji	1976	10.1		49.3		29.9
Samoa	1976	8.7		40.5		25.2
Tonga	1976	7.6		39.3		23.8

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982.

Table 2:
Female Labour's Share in the Agricultural Sector

Country/Member	Year	Agricultural labour share of total labour force	Females share of agri. employment to the total agri. employment	Size of female agricultural employment
Afghanistan	1979	60.1	-	10,660
Bangladesh	1974	77.1	..	610:256
Hong Kong	1976	-	33.1	16,250
	1981	1.4	40.6	15,947
Indonesia	1976	-	39.4	13,902,132
	1978	59.4	34.5	10,898,038
Japan	1975	-	48.9	3,607,230
	1981	9.8	48.3	2,690,000
Korea	1975	-	47.1	2,927,402
	1981	32.7	43.7	2,098,000
Nepal	1976	89.9	-	2,098,000
Philippines	1975	-	11.6	779,669
	1978	50.1	26.5	2,309,000
Sri Lanka	1971	-	27.4	501,231
	1980/81	40.1	28.3	648,119
Singapore	1976	-	23.9	4,723
	1980	1.5	43.6	3,036
Thailand	1976	-	36.8	3,182,760
	1980	70.1	49.5	7,893,900
Australia	1976	-	32.1	129,910
	1982	-	24.2	98,000
New Zealand	1976	-	18.0	23,203
	1981	-	21.9	31,030

Source: LIO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1976, 1979, 1980, 1982.

Table 3: Sectoral Distribution of Economically Active Female Population

Country/Member	Year	Female as % of Labour Force	Percentage Distribution in: Agriculture	Mining	Manufacturing	Public Utilities	Construction	Commerce	Transport	Finance and Banking	Community Service	Activities n.e.c.	Unemployed
Afghanistan	1979	8.0	0.3	0.5	6.4	*	*	*	*	0.8		0.2	-
Bangladesh	1974	4.4	3.0	*	0.2	*	*	0.1	*	*	0.9	0.2	-
Hong Kong	1976	35.1	0.8	*	20.5	0.1	0.3	5.0	0.6	1.0	5.8	0.5	0.5
	1981	35.3	0.6	*	18.8	0.1	0.4	5.8	0.9	1.9	6.8	*	-
India	1971	17.5	14.4	0.1	1.3	*	0.1	0.3	*	0.1	1.2	-	-
Indonesia	1976	38.8	25.5	*	3.0	*	0.1	5.6	*	*	3.0	0.8	0.8
	1978	35.6	20.5	*	3.7	*	*	7.7	*	*	3.7	*	-
Japan	1975	42.8	6.7	*	8.3	0.1	6.7	9.9	0.7	2.2	7.3	0.1	0.7
	1981	39.6	4.8	*	9.5	0.1	1.4	10.3	1.3	2.6	8.8	*	0.8
Korea	1975	41.8	21.9	0.1	6.3	*	0.3	5.3	0.4	0.3	3.0	-	1.5
	1981	40.8	14.3	0.1	7.6	0.1	0.4	9.2	3.8	0.9	3.5	-	0.9
Malaysia	1970	31.4	15.7	0.2	2.2	0.2	*	1.8	0.1	4.9		4.4	1.9
Nepal	1976	37.7	34.9	*	0.2	*	*	1.8	*	0.1	0.7	-	-
Philippines	1975	26.5	5.8	0.1	3.9	0.1	0.1	3.5	0.1	0.5	8.2	0.4	3.8
	1978	38.0	13.3	*	5.3	0.1	*	6.6	0.1	0.6	8.4	0.1	3.5
Sri Lanka	1971	26.4	11.0	0.1	2.3	*	*	0.6	0.1	0.1	3.0	1.1	8.1
	1980/81	28.1	11.3	0.1	3.3	0.1	0.2	1.5	0.1	0.2	3.8	0.9	6.6
Singapore	1976	32.4	0.6	0.1	10.5	0.1	0.5	6.9	1.8	2.3	7.7	*	1.9
	1980	34.7	0.2	-	13.5	0.1	0.5	7.1	1.7	3.1	7.2	*	1.3
Thailand	1976	38.4	22.7	0.1	5.5	0.3	*	5.1	0.2	4.2		-	0.3
	1980	47.2	34.7	*	3.4	*	0.3	4.5	0.1	3.8	*	*	0.4
Australia	1976	36.0	2.2	0.1	4.8	0.1	0.6	7.0	1.1	3.1	12.1	3.1	1.8
	1982	37.9	1.4	0.1	4.6		0.7	7.8	0.8	3.7	12.4	2.1	4.3
New Zealand	1976	31.4	1.8	*	5.7	0.2	0.4	7.3	1.8	2.8	10.3	0.9	0.2
	1981	34.5	2.3	0.1	6.5	0.2	0.4	7.1	1.9	3.2	11.3	1.0	0.5
Fiji	1976	16.9	4.0	*	1.0	*	0.1	2.6	0.3	0.6	5.9	2.4	-
Tonga	1976	16.0	0.4	*	0.4	*	0.3	1.8	0.3	0.2	6.1	3.8	2.9
Samoa	1976	16.7	4.3	*	0.6	*	*	2.9	0.5	0.3	8.0	0.1	

Source; ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982.

Table 4: Female Share of Employment in Manufacturing

Country/Member	Year	Mfg. sector's share of mfg. employment to total employment	Female share of employment in mfg. to total employment in manufacturing	Size of employment in manufacturing
Afghanistan	1979	10.7	-	252,465
Bangladesh	1974	4.6	-	36,297
Hong Kong	1976	-	46.1	399,950
	1981	39.1	48.1	470,400
Indonesia	1976	-	52.9	1,882,737
	1978	7.3	49.7	1,920,029
Japan	1975	-	34.0	4,476,920
	1981	24.3	38.8	5,380,000
Korea	1975	-	37.7	834,556
	1981	19.5	39.0	1,121,000
Nepal	1976	0.7	-	9,114
Philippines	1975	-	40.3	534,221
	1978	11.0	47.7	914,000
Sri Lanka	1971	-	29.2	99,290
	1980/81	10.1	33.4	191,282
Singapore	1976	-	40.4	94,611
	1980	29.1	46.3	149,973
Thailand	1976	-	50.2	759,830
	1980	7.9	42.1	752,700
Australia	1976	-	25.5	290,767
	1982	-	25.3	314,300
New Zealand	1976	-	26.8	82,003
	1981	-	27.4	87,140

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1976, 1979, 1980, 1982.

Exhibit 5: Female Representation in the Occupations

(Ratio of females in each occupation to the total number in each occupation)

Country/Member	Year	Professional/ Technical	Administrative/ Managerial	Clerical and related	Sales	Service	Agriculture/Forestry	Production/ Transport	Others	Total
Afghanistan	1979	55.1	10.4	54.2	28.8	56.1	3.0	10.0	44.0	27.3
Bangladesh	1974	5.9	1.5	1.1	1.2	23.1	3.8	4.7	6.2	4.2
Hong Kong	1976	41.4	9.2	42.2	23.6	33.7	31.9	37.0	29.3	35.0
	1981	40.6	11.8	50.8	28.1	34.4	38.3	34.6	19.2	35.9
India	1971	17.7	1.6	4.0	6.1	16.7	19.9	8.4	18.8	17.4
Indonesia	1976	33.3	5.1	11.2	48.3	44.0	39.5	31.9	32.7	38.7
	1978	37.9	2.4	10.3	51.9	43.2	34.6	31.3	25.8	36.2
Japan	1975	37.3	5.4	50.5	38.6	53.7	49.0	24.3	67.3	36.8
	1981	46.2	5.3	54.0	38.5	54.1	48.2	28.1	36.4	38.7
Korea	1975	25.2	3.7	23.3	36.1	57.0	47.3	28.0	0.7	38.8
	1981	31.1	1.9	33.6	44.2	57.8	43.8	26.7	-	37.4
Malaysia	1970	34.4	3.4	25.2	17.9	37.7	17.3	56.1	40.1	31.7
Nepal	1971	7.9	4.2	3.9	12.1	15.7	30.3	8.9	-	29.2
	1976	36.2	22.8	4.6	18.6	18.6	39.2	21.3	-	37.6
Philippines	1974	59.2	20.4	41.7	51.7	62.4	11.6	22.6	16.4	26.4
	1978	60.4	16.3	42.1	65.5	59.1	26.7	27.9	35.1	36.9
Sri Lanka	1971	41.0	5.9	10.5	6.3	23.2	27.8	14.6	24.0	26.2
	1980/81	48.7	6.7	19.1	15.3	27.1	28.3	20.5	-	28.1
Singapore	1976	37.9	6.9	53.3	23.9	45.2	20.9	26.3	1.5	31.4
	1980	38.9	14.2	62.7	29.1	43.7	22.9	31.4	1.6	35.2
Thailand	1976	43.9	12.4	37.0	56.1	46.3	36.9	33.5	-	38.4
	1980	47.1	17.8	42.8	59.5	50.0	49.6	29.8	47.6	47.3
Australia	1976	45.4	14.6	67.3	50.8	62.1	29.4	12.7	50.3	35.9
	1982	44.3	14.7	70.7	52.3	62.7	21.4	12.5	48.0	37.0
New Zealand	1976	41.3	7.0	65.9	38.0	57.8	16.9	14.0	31.6	32.0
	1981	43.1	9.3	69.4	41.3	52.4	20.1	14.8	31.3	34.2
Fiji	1976	36.6	7.7	39.3	22.7	44.9	8.6	4.4	32.9	16.8
Tonga	1976	37.4	8.0	38.3	46.9	16.5	0.6	5.2	46.1	15.7
Samoa	1976	47.9	10.7	39.9	53.0	51.4	6.7	6.1	42.4	16.7
Polinese Francaise	1977	45.6	7.3	55.1	48.4	17.0	10.4	7.6	11.6	28.6

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1977, 1979, 1980, 1982.

Table 6
Employment Status of Women
(Percentage to total employment status)

Country	Year	Own Account Workers	Employees	Unpaid Family Workers	Others	Total
Hong Kong	1976	1.8	30.3	1.7	1.3	35.1
	1981	1.5	31.8	1.4	1.3	36.0
Indonesia	1976	10.6	8.7	18.0	1.3	38.6
	1978	11.0	12.8	11.7	0.6	36.1
Japan	1975	4.3	22.0	10.1	0.6	37.0
	1981	5.0	24.4	8.4	1.0	38.8
Korea	1975	6.5	11.4	19.6	1.4	38.9
	1981	8.3	14.2	13.9	0.9	37.3
Philippines	1976	8.1	16.2	7.8	0.2	32.3
	1981	9.6	15.1	10.9	-	35.6
Singapore	1976	2.0	26.1	1.6	1.8	31.5
	1980	2.2	29.8	1.3	1.4	34.7
Sri Lanka	1971	2.2	11.6	2.1	8.1	24.0
	1980/81	3.3	14.7	3.6	6.6	28.2
Thailand	1976	11.0	7.8	19.5	0.3	38.6
	1980	8.2	8.0	30.8	0.4	47.4
Australia	1976	4.0	29.2	1.1	1.8	36.1
	1982	4.2	29.3	0.2	3.4	37.1
New Zealand	1976	2.1	28.7	0.3	1.0	32.1
	1981	2.4	29.5	0.4	1.9	34.2

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982.

Table 7:

Female Representation in Each Employment Status

(Ratio of female persons in each employment status to the total of each status)

Country	Year	Own-Account Workers & Employers	Employees	Unpaid Family labour	Others
Bangladesh	1974	1.9	2.7	10.7	5.9
Hong Kong	1976	16.5	36.9	63.3	30.2
	1981	15.5	37.5	78.8	33.6
Indonesia	1976	25.9	32.9	61.2	42.6
	1978	27.9	34.4	55.3	26.1
Japan	1975	25.3	32.0	80.0	28.9
	1981	30.2	34.5	81.4	36.8
Korea	1975	21.8	29.6	71.9	29.1
	1981	25.8	31.6	75.9	20.4
Nepal	1976	35.0	22.2	58.5	-
Philippines	1976	21.4	35.9	48.4	0.3
	1981	25.4	36.0	53.5	-
Singapore	1976	13.8	33.3	55.0	40.3
	1980	15.5	37.2	51.7	38.0
Sri Lanka	1971	6.8	25.6	47.4	43.5
	1980/81	14.0	27.2	45.5	43.7
Thailand	1976	24.1	31.8	65.9	32.5
	1980	26.2	36.8	66.3	40.4
Australia	1976	30.0	36.0	79.8	40.9
	1982	29.4	37.3	50.0	48.0
New Zealand	1976	15.5	34.2	42.7	32.0
	1981	18.0	36.2	78.2	40.6

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982.

Table 8: Female Labour Force Participation Rates by Ages

Country/Member	Year	0-14	15-19	20-24	15-24	25-44	45-54	55-64	65 +/100
Afghanistan	1979	19.9	20.3	16.5	36.8	34.1	5.9	2.5	0.7
Hong Kong	1981	-	13.0	24.6	37.6	39.0	12.9	7.5	2.9
Indonesia	1978	4.7	12.8	11.4	24.2	45.5	15.5	7.1	2.9
Japan	1980	-	3.5	12.8	16.3	45.6	21.6	7.3	4.6
Korea	1981	0.3	9.8	17.9	27.7	41.6	28.5		2.0
Malaysia	1979	-	15.3	22.3	27.6	45.0	11.9	5.5	-
Maldives	1977	9.7	16.8	14.2	31.0	39.8	12.5	5.2	1.8
Pakistan	1982	12.7	13.4	12.9	28.3	4.5	11.3	5.8	2.4
Philippines	1978	-	16.1	14.7	30.8	44.2	14.0	7.8	3.2
Singapore	1980	0.6	18.0	29.6	47.6	14.4	6.8	2.5	1.1
				(20-29)		(30-49)	(50-59)	(60 +)	
Sri Lanka	1980-81	1.8	11.6	36.6	48.2	39.1	8.1	2.8	-
Thailand	1980	5.0	16.8	14.3	31.1	36.3	23.9	3.7	-
Australia	1976	-	13.7	16.5	30.2	43.4	17.2	7.5	1.6
New Zealand	1981	-	10.0	14.5	24.5	46.5	17.0	10.4	1.6
				(20-29)		(30-49)	(50-54)	(55-64)	(65 +)
Niue	1976	-	20.0	29.5	49.5	41.0	3.8	4.2	1.5
			(0-19)					(55-59)	(60 +)
Polynesie Francaise	1977	-	8.9	21.3	30.2	53.0	12.0	2.4	2.4

Source: ILO, Year Book of Labour Statistics 1982.

Table 9:

Percentage of Youth Economically Active in the ESCAP Region ('000)

Country		Male			Female			Total		
		Economically active youth	Total male youth	Percentage of economic active male youth	Economically active youth	Total female youth	Percentage of economic active female youth	Total economically active youth	Total youth population	Percentage of economic active to total youth population
Afghanistan	(1979)	987.1	1,300.0	75.9	115.2	1,236.7	9.3	1,102.3	2,536.1	43.5
Bangladesh	(1979)*	4,169.3	5,569.9	74.9	204.2	5,260.1	3.9	4,373.5	10,830.0	40.4
Hong Kong	(1981)	417.8	600.2	68.6	335.9	547.6	61.3	747.6	1,147.8	65.1
Indonesia	(1978)	7,848.8	11,236.5	69.9	4,665.7	12,562.6	37.1	12,514.5	23,799.0	52.6
Japan	(1981)	3,540.0	8,190.0	43.2	3,440.0	7,870.0	43.7	7,000.0	16,050.0	43.6
Peninsula Malaysia	(1979)	891.4	1,299.6	68.6	591.3	1,260.4	46.9	1,482.7	2,560.0	57.9
Pakistan	(1982)	5,676.0	7,401.0	76.7	458.0	6,678.0	6.9	6,534.0	14.279.0	45.8
Singapore	(1980)	213.8	309.0	69.2	185.2	291.6	63.5	399.1	600.5	66.5
Thailand	(1980)	3,441.4	4,404.1	78.1	3,336.8	4,450.9	75.0	6,778.2	8,855.0	76.5
Samoa	(1974)	0.7	2.5	28.1	0.8	3.0	27.1	1.5	5.4	28.1
Australia	(1976)	847.4	1,180.0	71.8	658.4	1,148.1	57.3	1,505.8	2,328.2	64.7
New Zealand	(1978)*	209.5	294.8	71.1	152.8	281.6	54.3	362.3	576.4	62.9
Niue	(1976)	0.3	0.5	60.0	0.1	0.4	25.0	0.5	1.4	33.9

Source: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1981 and 1982, as quoted in section on "The Employment Situation in the ESCAP Region" of the forthcoming Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific, 1983.

Note: "Youth" is defined here as 15-24 years of age. The data on Niue include those between 15 to 29 years as a result of different classification system.

* From Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1981, ILO.

2. EDUCATION

Education is a main concern globally and of ESCAP's Regional Plan of Action, the World Programme of Action for the Second Half of the Decade and the stated aims of governments. To maximize development gains, it is imperative that women who are accountable for most the region's illiteracy and whose potential as human resources has not adequately been tapped, be engaged as full participants in development. However, their position in society and their ability to participate in social and economic development is substantially affected by their levels of literacy and education.

The educational status of women has generally improved in most countries of Asia and the Pacific during the last decade. However, statistical indicators have revealed that in most countries and areas of the region, women still lag far behind men and, even when they had the benefit of education, have not been able to utilize it in the same manner and to the same extent as men.

Educational Legislation and Policy

Promotion of equal educational opportunity has been one of the goals of educational policies in many countries and areas of the region. According to Governments' responses to the CSDHA/ESCAP questionnaires, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and West Samoa are reported to have adopted legislation to guarantee both men and women equal rights and access to education. China is reported to have an educational policy to ensure both male and female the same text books, curriculums, teachers, accommodation and facilities for study and both are judged by the same standards of eligibility to diplomas, admission to school of higher grade, stipends and scholarships.

Literacy

The Literacy rate is one of the useful indicators in appraising the educational status of women in the region. It has been noted that, since the proclamation of United Nations Decade for Women, literacy rates have increased markedly in most countries of the region. According to country inputs on the CSDHA/ESCAP country appraisal questionnaires, in Sri Lanka, the female literacy rate among the 15-19 age group has increased by 30 per cent in rural areas and 4 per cent in urban areas. The female literacy rate in the Philippines is reported to have risen by 2.3 per cent.

Table 10. Percentage of the population aged 15 and over which is literate, by sex

Country or area	Year	Males	Females
East Asia			
Hong Kong	1971	90	64
Japan	1960	99	97
Republic of Korea	1970	94	81
South-East Asia			
Brunei	1971	76	50
Burma	1980	76	56
Indonesia	1971	70	45
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1980	51	36
Malaysia a/	1970	69	42
Philippines	1970	84	81
Singapore	1980	93	89
Thailand	1970	87	70
South Asia			
Afghanistan	1980	33	6
Bangladesh	1974	37	13
India	1971	48	19
Iran	1976	48	24
Maldives	1977	82	82
Nepal	1975	33	5
Pakistan	1972	30	10
Sri Lanka	1971	86	68
South Pacific			
Fiji	1976	84	74
Papua New Guinea b/	1971	39	24

Source: UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook 1982.

a/ Age 10 and over for Sabah State.

b/ Age 10 and over.

Literacy rates are generally highest in East Asia, intermediate in South-East Asia and the South Pacific and lowest in South Asia. However, in cross-national comparisons, female literacy rates vary widely by country and area. Literacy among women exceeds 80 per cent in Japan, Singapore, Maldives, Republic of Korea and the Philippines. The proportion is over 50 per cent in Fiji, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Burma and Brunei. The lowest rates of female literacy are in Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Papua New Guinea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Indonesia (Table 1).

It is generally true that the differential between literacy rates of males and females narrows as literacy for women increases. Yet the gap is still wide. Female literacy rates are lower than those of males in all countries and areas of the region with the exception of Maldives, where female and maile literacy rates are equal. The gap of literacy rates between sexes is wider in India (29 per cent), Nepal (28 per cent), Malaysia (27 per cent), Afghanistan (27 per cent), Hong Kong (26 per cent), Brunei (26 per cent), Indonesia (25 per cent), Bangladesh (24 per cent), Iran (24 per cent), Burma (20 per cent), Pakistan (20 per cent), moderate in Sri Lanka (18 per cent), Thailand (17 per cent), Lao People's Democratic Republic (15 per cent), Papua New Guinea (15 per cent), Republic of Korea (13 per cent), Fiji (10 per cent) and narrow in Japan (2 per cent), Philippines (3 per cent) and Singapore (4 per cent).

Urban-rural disparities in literacy rates are wide in almost all countries and areas of the region with only a few exceptions, e.g. in West Samoa where the disparity is only 1 per cent. The female literacy rates of Indonesia are reported to be 76.1 per cent in urban areas and 55.8 per cent in rural areas. In Sri Lanka, female literacy rates in urban areas are reported to be 88.6 per cent among 15-19 age group and 82.0 per cent among women over 20 years of age, whereas in the rural areas, the ratios are 88.1 per cent among 15-19 age group and 70.2 per cent among women over 20.

In most countries, the majority of illiterates are women. Virtually the whole rural female population is illiterate in Afghanistan (98 per cent), Pakistan (95 per cent), Bangladesh (88 per cent), and India (87.5 per cent). The lowest rates appear in the Republic of Korea (26.6 per cent), the Philippines (22.8 per cent), Sri Lanka (34.9 per cent) and Thailand (31.6 per cent). In all these countries, the rate of illiteracy for females exceeds that of the male, in some cases by twice as much.

/The general

The general trend of literacy rates within the region therefore, according to the inputs from limited number of countries and area on the CSDHA/ESCAP country appraisal questionnaires and data from other available sources, is as follows:

(a) The female literacy rates are on an increases;

(b) Male literacy rates are generally higher than female literacy rates;

(c) For females, the degree of literacy is higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

Female enrolment

The countries and areas of the region have made impressive gains in school enrolment ratios during the evaluation period. An analysis of female enrolment ratios at each successive level of education provides an indication of progress made since 1975.

The female enrolement ratios at the first level of education have generally increased. According to the data from 21 countries and areas available (Table 2), the ratios in four countries (Nepal, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Indonesia and Sri Lanka) have increased by a bigger margin compared with the others. However, seven countries (Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand) reported a decline. (Table 2)

According to the latest data available, female enrolment ratios at the first level varied by country. The ratios of ten countries and area are indicated at above 100. They are China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam. The lowest ratios are found in Bhutan, Afghanistan, East Timor and Pakistan.

In all countries and areas of the region, enrolment ratios at the first level for females are substantially below the ratios for males, with the exception of Japan where the ratios for both sexes are equal. In the light of data from 24 countries and areas available. Six countries indicated a wider ratio-disparities between sexes (Nepal, Pakistan, East Timor, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India), while eight countries and areas reported a narrow gap (Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, People's Democratic Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Thailand).

/In the

In the whole region, the participation of women at the second level of education increased slightly during the evaluation period. However, five countries indicated a decline in the female enrolment ratios at the second level (Bangladesh, China, Bahrain, Viet Nam and Burma). India and Japan reported no change. Four countries and areas reported a wider increase (Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Hong Kong and Malaysia).

In cross-national comparisons, there is a wide range of female enrolment ratios at the second level. It appears that the ratios are higher in Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore and lower in East Timor, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Democratic Kampuchea.

Generally, female enrolment ratios at the second level are lower than those of males, but it does happen that six countries in the region indicated a higher female enrolment ratios than those of males (Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Japan). In a contrast, the female enrolment ratios in Nepal, India, Bangladesh lag far behine those of males.

The female enrolment ratios at the third level of education increased slowly. Comparatively, the ratios of five countries (Japan, Thailand, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Malaysia) appear to be a little higher than those of others. Bhutan indicated no change and two countries (Singapore and Democratic Kampuchea) showed a decline.

The female enrolment ratios at the third level vary by country. The ratios in Philippines, Japan and Mongolia are much higher than those of other countries. In sharp contrast, the ratios of Bhutan and Lao People's Democratic Republic are found to be the lowest.

In light of the data available, female enrolment ratios at the third level of education are lower than those of males in almost all countries and areas of the region. But this is not true in the cases of the Philippines where the male ratio lags behind that of females and of Burma where the figure for both sexes stands equal. However, in all other countries, the sex gap is quite wide, with the ratios in Japan and Philippines being the wides.

/In summary,

In summary, the region-wide female enrolment ratios at the first level of education generally increased substantially but the pace of increase gets slower with each higher level. The increase of female enrolment ratios are slower than those of males at the first and the third levels of education, but faster at the second level. However, generally speaking, the female enrolment ratios are lower than those of males at all levels.

Drop-outs

Education wastage through stagnation and early leaving further compounds the educational backwardness of girls in many countries. Data relating to drop-outs indicate that urban-rural differences are significant, but that there is little difference in drop-out rates by sex in countries which have achieved parity or a relatively high enrolment. On the other hand, many recent studies show that more girls than boys drop-out in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal and, in fact, in the majority of the countries.

The school drop-out rate for female in Indonesia is reported to be 35.3 per cent at primary level, 2.4 per cent at secondary level and 1.8 per cent at tertiary level in urban areas while, in rural areas, the rates turn out to be 39.3 per cent at primary, 0.2 per cent at secondary and 0.1 per cent at tertiary levels. The female drop-out rate in the Philippines is reported to decline by 8.2 per cent, whereas male rate declines by 19.0 per cent.

Obstacles encountered

Traditional attitudes, sterotyped sex-role definitions, behavioural expectations associated with women, the image of women as exclusively home-makers, the sense of inferior self-image caused by social-cultural influences, financial constraints and lack of effective machinery for the enforcement of relevant legislation are cited as obstacles impeding women's access to equal educational opportunities.

Table 11. School enrolment ratios

Country or Area	First level		Second level		Third level			
	M	F	M	F	M		F	
Afghanistan								
Age group	6-13		14-17		20-24			
1975	44	8	13	2	1.7		0.3	
1979	49	10	16	3	2.8		0.5	
Bahrain								
Age group	6-11		12-16		20-24			
1975	107	85	51	54	1.8		3.2	
1979	110	93	56	52	39		3.8	
Bangladesh								
Age group	5-9		10-14		20-24			
1975	91	50	38	11	-		-	
1981	76	47	24	6	-		-	
Bhutan								
Age group	6-11		12-16		20-24			
1976	12	5	2	0.27	-		-	
1979	15	7	2	1	0.3		0.1	
1980	-	-	-	-	0.4		0.1	
Burma								
Age group	5-9		10-15		20-24			
1975	86	30	24	19	-		-	
1977	87	81	22	18	14.2	4.2 (1978)		
China								
Age group	7-11		12-17		20-24			
1979	132	112	55	39	1.6		0.5	
1980	132	110	52	35	-		-	
Democratic Kampuchea								
Age group	6-11		12-18		20-24			
1970	35	26	11	5	2.3		0.7	
1972	48	35	13	6	2.6		0.6	
East Timor								
Age group	6-9		10-16		20-24			
1970	74	27	2	1	-		-	
Hong Kong								
Age group	6-11		12-18		20-24			
1975	122	117	51	47	14.7	(1979)	5.3	
1980	111	107	60	65	13.4	6.1		
India								
Age group	5-9		10-15		20-24			
1975	92	60	35	16	13.0	(1977)	4.2	
1978	90	61	37	18	12.9	4.5		
Indonesia								
Age group	7-12		13-18		20-24			
1975	90	76	24	15	4.3	(1970)	1.3	
1980	119	104	33	22	-		-	

Country or Area	First level		Second level		Third level		
	M	F	M	F	M		F
Japan							
Age group		6-11		12-17			20-24
1975	99	99	91	92	33.0	(1979)	16.0
1980	101	101	91	92	39.6		19.8
Korea, Democratic People's Republic of							
Age group		5-9		10-15			20-24
1976	118	114	-	-	-		-
Korea, Republic of							
Age group		6-11		12-17			20-24
1975	107	107	64	48	13.7	(1980)	5.4
1981	108	105	89	80	20.7		7.0
Lao People's Democratic Repub.							
Age group		6-11		12-18			20-24
1975	71	51	10	4	0.3	(1970)	0.1
Malaysia							
Age group		6-11		12-18			20-24
1975	93	89	48	39	2.3	(1970)	0.9
1981	94	91	54	51	3.7	(1979)	2.1
Mongolia							
Age group		8-11		12-15			20-24
1975	111	105	77	84	8.2		8.6
1979	107	102	85	92	6.6		10.4
Nepal							
Age group		6-10		11-15			20-24
1975	84	16	22	4	3.3	(1977)	1.1
1980	126	53	33	9	4.1		1.2
Pakistan							
Age group		5-9		10-16			20-24
1975	62	28	22	7	2.7	(1977)	0.9
1979	81	30	22	8	2.8		1.1
Philippines							
Age group		7-12		13-16			20-24
1980	111	108	58	68	23.0	(1979)	26.6
Singapore							
Age group		6-11		12-17			20-24
1975	114	107	52	53	10.9	(1979)	7.5
1980	108	105	53	58	8.8		6.0

Country or area	First level		Second level		Third level	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sri Lanka						
Age group	6-10		11-17		20-24	
1975	81	74	47	49	1.7 (1979)	1.0
1980	103	97	50	52	3.0	2.0
Thailand						
Age group	7-11		14-18		20-24	
1975	87	81	28	23	4.0	2.7
1977	85	80	30	26	6.0	4.6
Vietnam Nam						
Age group	6-10		11-16		20-24	
1975	124	114	46	45	2.4 (1978)	1.5
1979	124	109	52	43	4.3	1.9

Source: UNESCO, Statistical Year Book 1982, Table 3.2

3. HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY

This part of the review has been based on the few questionnaires which have been returned from the Member countries. Although other sources of data on health and demography exist, they were not forthcoming with sex-specific breakdowns at this stage. By the time of the Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, however, it is hoped that such sex-specific data on all pertinent indicators on health and demography would be available.

(a) The Sex Ratio (number of males per 100 females): China, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Western Samoa (urban) reported increases in the sex ratio. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka reported decreases ranging from 0.5% to 10.0%. In countries that produced urban/rural figures, the increase in ratio was more in the urban areas, for men.

(b) Maternal Death Rate (per 1,000 live births): China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka all showed marked decreases over an average time span of 5 years. Countries which produced a figure only for one point in time (t_1) showed low rates. Generally it could be inferred that maternal death rates for the region have decreased perhaps due to more accessible and easily available medical services.

(c) Fertility Rates: Apart from Nepal and Laos which showed no change in fertility rates, all other countries in Asia showed decreasing rates, China more than the others. Two countries in the Pacific subregion, Fiji and Papua New Guinea showed increases. While these results may appear to be typical for Pacific countries, the actual rate of increase may be deceptive. Effective family planning programmes are probably reflected in the results.

(d) Average number of children: Only two countries produced results, the Philippines and Western Samoa, which both showed a decrease in average number of children. Most likely, these results are decreased fertility, the reasons for such decrease being effective family planning programmes, economic constraints and perhaps more opportunities for education.

(e) Child mother ratio for all women: Again, countries which gave answers all showed decreases in fertility rates and in the average number of children.

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(f) Number of trained mid-wives: China and the Philippines showed an increase in the number of trained mid-wives. Most countries in the region are developing health policies which are geared towards more community participation and more female health workers, including the training of traditional birth attendants.

(g) Rate of delivery assistance: China and the Philippines showed increases in the rate of delivery assistance provided. This may mean that women are making more use of available and accessible medical services.

(h) Life Expectancy: All countries showed rising life expectancy, through better medical services than those available a decade ago. The life expectancy of women relative to men was greater, in almost all the areas for which data was available, although its rate of increase during the past decade or so was approximately on par with that of man. In the case of Viet Nam, however, the increase in the life expectancy of men is greater than that of women over the past 5 years. This could possibly be an after effect of the war.

(i) General Mortality Rate: All countries showed decreased mortality rates except Hong Kong, Singapore and Bhutan which showed slight increases. The mortality rate for Nepal showed a significant increase although life expectancy itself seemed to have increased.

(j) Major Causes of Death: For China, the major cause of death was heart disease, more so for women than for men. For Sri Lanka, seriality was the major cause for both sexes. For Western Samoa, undefined "ill" conditions was the main cause and this more so for men. For Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore, diseases of the circulatory system were the major cause of death. Except for Singapore which had more men dying from diseases of the circulatory system than women, an equal percentage of men and women died from this cause. For Malaysia, Thailand, and Burma, as in the case of Western Samoa, ill-defined conditions were the major cause of death, with a slightly higher percentage for men than for women. Overall, the main cause of death was diseases of the circulatory system.

(k) Rate of Participation in Family Planning: For China, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Western Samoa, the rates of participation have increased over a period of 5 years. Other countries have shown figures only for recent years which seemed high, however, no comparisons could be made over a time period. One however could deduce from decreasing fertility rates and decreasing average number of children that perhaps the rates of participation in family planning have been increasing significantly.

Information on morbidity, age on first marriage, incidence of major illnesses, daily calorie intake and other indicators were not available at this time.

C. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

LEGAL STATUS

In order to understand the existing situation regarding the legal status of women it is important to recognize that women in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers continue to this day to be governed by values derived from tradition. This system categorically denies women equal religious or secular status and consciously promotes the ideal of submissive, self-effacing, obedient and dependent womanhood. It is important to recognize that, in this tradition, women are defied if they show the capacity for total submission as wives and daughters. Also that, although they are venerated as mothers, such veneration is due to them as mothers of sons, and not often as mothers of daughters.

It is equally important to recognize that in many countries of the region personal law is religious, not secular. Moreover personal law is not uniform for all people. Each religious group is governed by its own law as handed down and defined in its religious tradition. The governments, though committed to a secular uniform civil code, are still in the process of transition from the religious and customary to the secular. Secular sentiments of social justice and of equality, expressed in movements for social and legislative reform dating back to the nineteenth century have made only formal, not necessarily substantive impact bringing about some adjustments in the religious and customary laws, but not making a significant breakthrough in concrete practice. Many of the traditional practices that oppress women have been recognized as offences against law. But in many countries they do not enjoy the status of "cognizable" offences and, even when they do, their enforcement is at best lukewarm and haphazard. This means that offenders are not sought out and brought to court by the police machinery. The task is left to the "aggrieved parties" concerned. But the "aggrieved parties" who are essentially the victims of the oppression that legislation seeks to remove, are rarely in a position to go to court. Consequently the legal provisions are not really used.

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The second major problem in some countries is the acceptance of the principle that each religious group is to be governed by its own laws. This principle supports the notion that issues relating to marriage, divorce, property etc. are 'sacred' rather than 'secular' in character and that disputes relating to these matters are to be judged not on the basis of a secular ethic but on the basis of religious tradition. Most religious laws have been framed in periods of history when ideas of personal freedom and of equality had not gained ground. They are in varying degrees unregardful of sex equality. This inequality is supported as being sanctioned by religion.

Thus the issues relating to the legal status of women in family and in society are far from having been resolved during the Decade, whether they be women's rights to head a household, carry her own name after marriage, rights to children outside marriage, consent to marriage, child marriage, prosecution of sex offences, the dowry system, rights to inheritance and property, divorce, guardianship over children or equal rights of women in employment. The issues relating to women's legal status in marriage and family have been covered in two separate papers.* Therefore, only the issues pertaining to women in employment will be briefly dealt with under this section.

Labour legislation

Constitutions, civil codes, labour codes and other regulations of most ESCAP countries, enacted or introduced long before the Decade, provide for equal opportunities for and status of women with regards to their employment and labour conditions. In the case of one particular country for which information is available, an Equal Remuneration Act was passed in 1976, laying down stringent requirements regarding equal pay for equal work and providing for the constitution of one or more committees to advise government as to the extent and level at which women can be employed, in order to expand women's employment.

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* Mrs. Pushpa Kapila Hingorani, Marriage Systems And The Status of Women in Asia and the Pacific. (SD/EGM/FSAW/4).

Ms. Daphne A. Kok, Legal Framework for Inheritance and Property Ownership by Women in Asia and the Pacific Countries.

Even where specific legislative action has been taken to guarantee women's equality in employment and to provide special protection called for by their function and role as childbearers and mothers, such as that cited above, there seems to have been little progress in enforcing the legal provisions. At many establishments, men usually occupy supervisory and managerial positions while women are at the bottom, making the issue of equal pay for equal work practically irrelevant. The issue is moot in another context where the employees are almost entirely women, such as in the garment, food processing and electronics industries, because there is no significant number of male employees to serve as comparison group.

In some enterprises, women are required to waive their rights to maternity leave on subsequent marriage and pregnancy. In other instances, young women workers are required to show proof of menstruation to a female supervisor or a nurse in order to claim leave, so that many forego the entitlement rather than go through the procedure.*

The majority of women employed in the industrial sector are daily labourers which makes them ineligible for normal social security benefits even in those countries where such systems exist. And, with the exception of a handful of countries, the agricultural and informal sectors are not covered by social security schemes of any kind. This means that a vast majority of Asian and Pacific women who form the backbone of development of their countries, in agriculture and in industry, struggle in the most precarious of conditions of existence.

Examples of worse violations of labour codes abound in the region. If full participation of women in the economy in general and employment in particular is a crucial precondition for the advancement of their status and for their emergence as viable force and resource in development, the failure to achieve significant breakthroughs in the area of labour law enforcement must be regarded a major challenge yet to be met in the post-Decade years.

/POLITICAL

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* Diane Wolf, Rural Females to the Factory: Household and Village Perspectives from Central Java. A research paper presented at a symposium on Women in the Urban and Industrial Work Force in South-east and East Asia, 15-19 November 1982, Manila and published by University of the Philippines.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Data on the changes in the status of women's political participation is not yet available. According to information drawn from various informal sources, no significant inroads have been made in most countries of the region. The likely exceptions may be the socialist countries. As the following table shows, in China, 21.2% of a total of 2,978 Deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC) were women in 1983; 9.0% of the 155 member NPC Standing Committee were women, and one of the 20 Vice Chairmen of NPC was a woman. Otherwise, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines had an edge over other countries of non-socialist persuasion.

Table 12. Women in National Legislature

Country and Year		Members			
		Total	Men	Women	(Share of Total)
1. China	1983				
(Deputies to NPC*		2,978	2,346	632	(21.2)
- (Members of NPC Standing Committee		155	141	14	(9.0)
(Vice Chairman of NPC		20	19	1	(5.0)
- Provincial		349	329	20	(5.7)
2. Indonesia	1977	460	439	31	(6.7)
	1982	460	418	42	(9.1)
3. Japan	1982				
House of Representative		500	491	9	(1.8)
House of Councillors		246	231	15	(6.1)
4. Korea	1976	221	218	8	(3.6)
	1981	276	268	8	(2.9)
5. Malaysia	1982	212	198	14	(6.7)
6. Philippines	1983	178	167	11	(6.2)
7. Sri Lanka	1979				
Urban		314	209	5	(1.6)
Municipalities		192	185	7	(3.6)
8. Thailand					
9. Western Samoa	1979	47	46	1	(2.1)
	1982	47	46	1	(2.1)

Source: Response to ESCAP Questionnaire on Review and Appraisal of the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women.

*NPC: National People's Congress.

D. OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED

The half of dozen or so of country appraisals received so far identified the obstacles as follows:

1. Inadequate funding.

Women's programmes, regardless of the level at which the national machinery or women's focal point has been established, are experiencing difficulty in competing with other sectors for the national budget. The largest allocation reported so far was 0.7% of the total government budget for 1983 in one country. Elsewhere budget provisions tended to be limited to personnel costs, with very little, if any, for programme costs. Scarcity of bilateral aid was also reported in this connection.

2. Socio-cultural and attitudinal barriers.

Socio-cultural barriers reinforced by class/caste systems and religion are still massive in most countries of Asia and the Pacific. This was reported not only in all the developing countries of the region but in the "developed" context as well. For instance in one of the highly industrialized countries where the level of women's education is exceedingly high and women make up nearly 39% of the labour force, 70% of the women who responded to a 1979 public opinion survey conducted by the Prime Minister's Office of the country either "strongly" or "slightly" agreed with the statement that "A woman's place is in the home".* In the survey, only 6% less women than men held this view, perhaps indicative of the extent to which women have been "socialized" in the "man's world".

3. Most women at the grass-roots carry the heavy load of family responsibility which leaves them little time for participation in activities outside the home, whether they be in education/training, socio-cultural, organizational or political activities. This is particularly true of the women engaged in home-based or outside wage employment.

4. Inadequate implementation of plans by government.

In one of the countries reporting this problem, substantial allocation was made for educational, health and employment oriented programmes for women as part of development plans. The implementation rates were not only consistently low in all the three plan periods concerned but they declined from 17.79% during the first plan period in question to 14.59% during the last plan period.

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* Mayami Moriyama (Member of the House of Counsellors, Japan) in Woman in Japan, a paper presented at Asian Woman Parliamentarians' Seminar, 21-25 June 1982, Seoul, Korea.

5. Inadequate co-ordination between government departments, lack of support from other concerned ministries, fractionalization of women's organizations, ad hoc nature of plans and programmes for women, wide spread illiteracy and low level of education among women, and the poverty of the vast majority of women.

It is not possible to assess at this stage the relative weight of the above obstacles reported. One thing is clear, however; they are all very far-ranging, deeply entrenched and systemically complex ones which make the task of overcoming them in the years ahead extremely challenging.

Measures taken or being taken by governments to overcome these obstacles included the creation of inter-agency committees, intersectoral task forces, acceleration of information exchange activities, more efforts towards effective monitoring, efforts toward more comprehensive and clearly spelled out development plans, training of personnel servicing women's machineries at the national and subnational levels, more systematic information activity addressed to mass media, revision of school curricula to change public perception or understanding of issues relating to women, among others.

III. EMERGING ISSUES

If one were to draw a picture of what has been achieved or has happened in the region during the Decade in advancing the status of women and improving their conditions in society, the picture would need to include, at least as far as most countries are concerned the following:

(a) The official action structure consisting of a national machinery or one or more focal points placed under sectoral ministries, bureaux or departments with relatively little resources or substantive power;

(b) Disparate but significant pockets of resurgent women representing both the elite and the grass-roots who have begun to mobilize themselves purposively towards economic and socio-political independence and participation through organization or networking, financial and material resource creation for co-operative enterprises and projects and research, training and information activities; and

(c) Quantitative gains in employment, education and health areas with mixed or even doubtful qualitative impact on the status and conditions of women.

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With this overall background, the following issues and problems could be seen to be emerging:

1. There are indications that the public sector or governments charged with the national responsibility for pursuing the goals and objectives of the Decade of Women have not been able to implement plans even when resources have been available either because the official action structure is still inadequate vis-a-vis implementation, the commitment is not strong enough, or because the government machinery is already over-loaded and cannot absorb the additional massive activities that need to be taken across many sectors if an impact on the status and situation of women is to be made. This argues for substantial strengthening of the existing government machinery supported by adequate resource allocation. It also argues that, given the unavoidable constraints on national resources in general and on government machinery in particular, a substantial share of the responsibilities and tasks should be delegated to the NGO sector with policy and resource support.

2. The potentials and limitations of existing or traditional institutions, customs and practices vis-a-vis the promotion of the status of women has not been sufficiently explored and understood. While many aspects of existing institutions and traditions serve as serious barriers to the advancement of women and their full participation in society, it is necessary to link the forward-looking efforts to integrate women to those positive aspects of the same institutions and traditions which can render support and authenticity to such efforts.

3. In some respects, the women's movement in Asia has been modelled after that of the western industrialized countries albeit different socio-cultural and political roots. It may therefore be necessary for women's movements in this region to seek their roots and context in positive aspects of their own social, cultural, ideological and political history.

4. It can be argued that the emphasis and focus of efforts in the women's field have tended to seek advantage in the status quo of socio-economic and political milieu largely created by men and according to their values and rules. That milieu and the values and rules in it has clearly demonstrated its limitations and once it is already plain that women will continue to be at a disadvantage in such context. The search for an alternative development that can transcend exist forces is therefore a crucial issue.

5. Despite higher levels of education and standards of living and expanded participation of women in economy, attitudes towards women have not undergone significant change. This applies not only to our society in general but to women themselves. While many reasons may underlie this attitudinal immobility, the content of and motivation behind formal and non-formal education and information activities in many countries largely are responsible for this. Serious reforms in all education and public information strategies would seem a must in the days ahead.

6. The women's movement in many countries is carried out by a small number of elite women. Their movements are often alienated from the grass-roots. While the vital role and function of the elites in influencing national policies and public understanding are not in question, the need to develop a strong linkage between the elites and women at the grass-roots would seem urgent in providing the needed dynamism and force to women's movements. It is only when the two sectors of women can transcend their at times conflicting interests and work in concert both in infrastructure and in substance can the women's movement be both effective and equal.

7. In many countries, participation of women in the economy, particularly in the industrial and modern sectors has been largely limited to those from the poorer strata. In other words, the notion of economic participation at all levels in its wider implications is not yet widespread in the region, indicating massive waste and loss of resources for not only the economy but other social and political development.

8. Although no comprehensive statistical data are available on this subject, reports on various surveys carried out by independent academic and research institutions indicated that, in the newly industrializing areas of the developing countries, the wages for female employees are so low that their "reproduction cost" is in fact partly subsidized by their families. This means that some, if not many, developing countries, particularly the poor sectors in those countries, are in effect subsidizing the ground in business of both native and foreign origins.

9. So long as the majority of women in paid employment, usually from 15 to 25 years of age, are drawn from the poorer sectors and therefore are likely to be illiterate or undereducated, no amount of expansion of women's participation in economy will bring about the desired change in the overall status of women in general and that of those women who actually engage in economy, unless other policy changes are instituted along with that participation.

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10. A rapidly increasing number of women are entering into the informal sector. Yet information on this sector is almost non-existent. Although some studies have been carried out in this area by independent researchers in a number of countries, such research needs to be expanded greatly and the situation of women and their families in this sector grasped firmly as a preliminary to addressing the needs and requirements of these women. It is likely that since, in some countries, a majority of women working belong to this sector, government policies and programmes and efforts of NGOs may need to be directed primarily to this population group.

11. The dual status of women, that is in its formal and/or legal aspects and in reality, is likely to continue to have the effect of leading the public into complacency and a false sense of progress, blinding it to the actual situation of millions of women subjected to injustice and deprived of opportunities for personal growth and development and for contribution in society.

12. While the advantages associated with an integrated approach to women's issues are well known and accepted, the situation of women in Asia and the Pacific may require women-specific approaches for a time to come in view of the still low level and widely entrenched attitudinal barriers that exist in the region towards accepting women as equals of men.

13. Where progress has been made in the status of women, it is clear that this is positively related to declines in fertility, and increases in education and participation in the work force. This indicates that it is necessary to see women as a largely unused potential in the interest for national development, and therefore to invest in their participation in these plans in all areas. On available evidence, such a strategy pays off both in terms of progress in national development and in terms of improvements in the status of women.

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